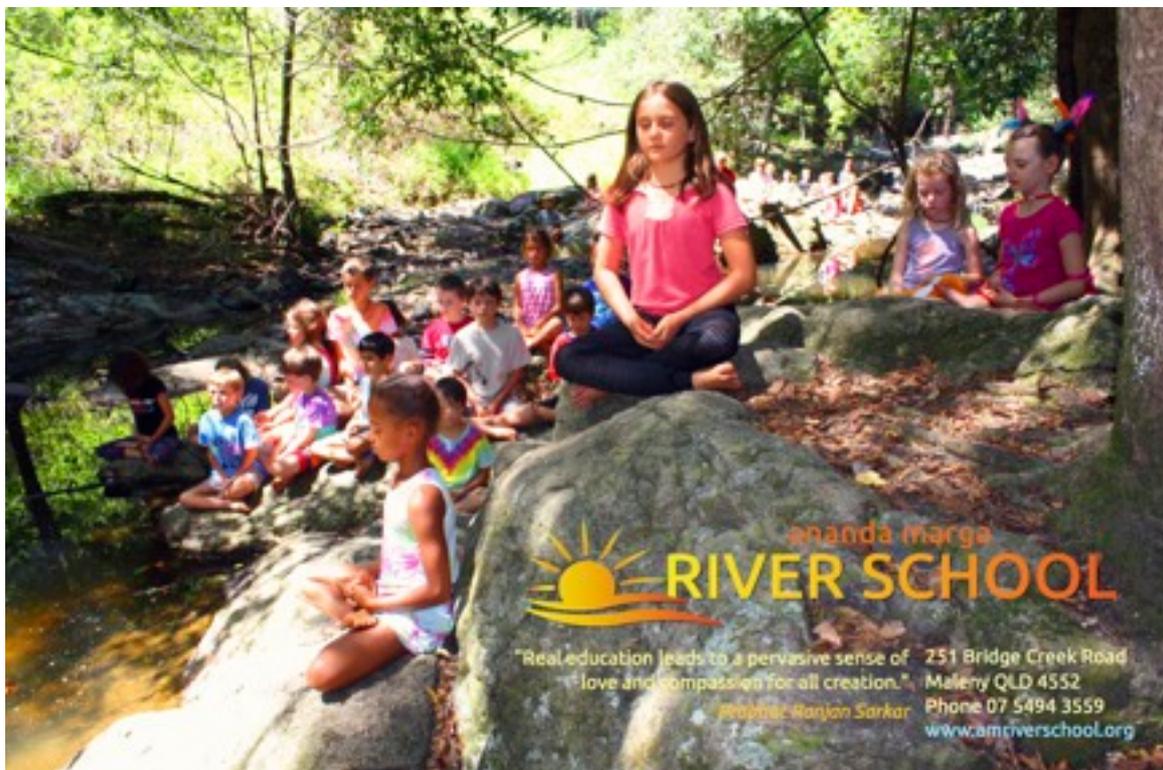




251 Bridge Creek Road, PO Box 411, Maleny, Queensland 4552  
ABN: 18 058 179 301 Tel: (07) 5494 3559 Fax: (07) 5494 3577 [www.amriverschool.org](http://www.amriverschool.org)

## Annual School Report 2015

(Based on 2015 Data)



The Ananda Marga River School is an independent, co-educational primary school and Early Childhood Centre located in a beautiful rainforest valley in Maleny, Queensland. The school is a service project of Ananda Marga, a global organisation for self-realisation and service to all.

The guiding philosophy of the Ananda Marga River School is Neohumanist Education. Based on Neohumanism, the philosophy of the innate oneness of all things, it seeks to instill in children an innate sense of love and compassion for all beings: people, animals, plants, and even the inanimate matter of the whole universe.

Our school is a loving community for 136 primary students from Prep to Year 6 (64 girls and 72 boys). We also operate a Long Day Care Centre for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children, and an After School Care Program.

# History of the Ananda Marga River School

The community land on which the school is situated was purchased in 1984. It comprises a total of 52 acres and a community of five families. In 1987, the community decided to set aside a portion of the land (some 25 acres to the south of a gully which divides the property) for Ananda Marga projects. This portion of the land was named Ananda Kamala meaning “Bliss of the lotus flower”. The first project, the Ananda Marga River School, opened in 1995 with 23 students. The school’s name was decided by the children who enjoyed playing in beautiful Bridge Creek that runs through the school.

The dedication and passion of the Prout Community, Ananda Marga Education and numerous Dada's and Didi's has shaped the River School to become a leader of Neohumanist educational practices. Some of the original founders of the school remain on the Prout community and continue to be significant contributors to the school culture and environment. Prabha Demasson, a co-founder and major contributor to the development of the school, served 16 years as Deputy Principal, and 3 years as Principal before leaving in 2013. At this time, Jenny Oakley was appointed as the new Principal to continue the legacy and vision of the school founders.

## Social Climate

Based on our Neohumanist philosophy, the school works to foster a sense of family in the school. This family feeling extends beyond the school to all humanity and even beyond to plants and animals. Children develop this understanding both intuitively and rationally. In meditation they are guided to experience their oneness with all things. Rationally they learn to respect and appreciate the diversity and unity of our human family. Service projects are encouraged in every class, in each phase of learning, so that children can act on their understanding of connectedness and develop confidence and skills to make meaningful changes in the world around them.

The school also runs “Buddy Programs” between younger and older classes, including our Early Childhood Centre. Furthermore, some sporting and service projects involve multi-age groups to build a sense of community in the school.



## **Distinctive Curriculum Offerings and Extra-Curricular Activities**

### **MORNING CIRCLE**

The week begins with an all-school Morning Circle that includes a candle-lighting ceremony, singing, meditation, small performances, our virtues program and general announcements. Parents often attend these uplifting gatherings and are welcome to take part.

### **MEDITATION AND YOGA**

This is our daily Quiet Time. Children benefit from early use of their imagination and intuition in creative visualisation and meditation exercises. Yoga exercises help children stretch and relax, meditation centres them, and discussions at this time focus on our virtues and other introspective topics.

### **THE ARTS**

We have specialist teachers in Music and Arts and Cultural Studies. Students have the opportunity to learn guitar, piano, percussion, and strings and the school offers a variety of choirs and performance groups. All students study marimba throughout their River School years, as well as having the opportunity to learn string instruments such as violin and guitar. Individual private lessons in guitar and keyboard are also available. Media Studies is now being offered to our students through our Arts and Cultural Studies Program, which also includes Indigenous studies.

### **SPORT**

During 2015, the school participated in a number of sporting activities. Our Prep to Year 6 students enjoyed swimming lessons at the Maleny Pool and our Year 6 children learned how to surf. We held our "Friendly Olympics" in Term 3 and in the summer season, students of all ages cooled off in our fresh water creek at the school. Australian Rules Football was offered to the students in Term 2 as an additional extracurricular activity.



## **EMPOWERMENT CENTRE**

Our Empowerment Centre offered one-on-one and small group learning support in literacy to supplement classroom programs. The Empowerment Centre is a place of learning where students at the River School are provided with intensive literacy tuition to ensure they reach their full potential in the classroom. Programs run at the Empowerment Centre are individually tailored to meet the needs of each student and are designed to compliment their learning preferences.

The Empowerment Centre maintains a close relationship with all classroom teachers. This in turn guarantees that learning activities completed at the Centre support the students' classroom learning. At the end of each term a progress report is compiled for each student, drawing upon qualitative and quantitative data collected throughout the term. Our Empowerment Centre also has a Literacy Coaching component, where the Empowerment Centre coaches classroom teachers in best practice literacy teaching.

## **SCHOOL CAMPS**

The River School loves school camps! In 2015 our Year 1 and 2 students stayed on Bribie island for 2 nights with their parents and teachers.

Our year 3 students did a 2 night camp at Bribie Island while our Year 4's camped at Noosa North Shore and our 5's attended a camp at Moreton Island. Our Red Cedars (Year 6) travelled to the Great Barrier Reef for a week. Our senior boys and girls participated in our annual rite of passage activities including our 2 day "Warrior Camp" and "Girl EmPowerment" Programs.

## **HEALTH**

Our vegetarian, whole foods tuckshop provided delicious meals for purchase three days a week. Each classroom has a garden area where children have the opportunity to grow food for the tuckshop kitchen.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Children from Year 5 were involved in Kids in Action week run by the Sunshine Coast Council and produced a video on the environmental challenges facing our planet. Our student-made film 'How Long is Long', produced by the 2014 Year 5 class, was accepted into the 'Little Big Shots International Film Festival for Kids' and was screened as part of the Kids in Action Conference. Our film was showcased at the Australian Centre for Moving Image in Melbourne in May 2015. It was then part of a tour to the major capital cities, as an example of innovative and quality Australian-made student-made films. The festival director said our film was chosen from a very competitive pool of student films Australia-wide.

The 2015 Year 5 students produced a film for the Kids in Action Conference entitled "The River School Paper Squad" which focused our Paper Project which saw the students recycling paper in the school. The film was a finalist in the Heart of Gold International Short Film



Festival which was held in October of 2015.

Across the school, students also participated in Anzac Day celebrations, NAIDOC commemorations and Harmony Day.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Our Upper Primary students attended the local Maleny Community Centre Neighbourhood Lunch on a fortnightly basis to assist in serving food to the local community. Our tuckshop also prepared and provided sentient, vegetarian dishes to this worthy cause.

### **ELECTIVES**

Students from Prep to Year 6 participated in an elective program that allowed them to select areas of interest to explore. These included activities such as origami, golf, cooking, sewing, ICT, ball games, Indian culture, meditation, netball and creek exploring. This elective program is so successful that it has become a standard element of the distinctive River School curriculum.

### **Parental Involvement**

Our school welcomes Parent volunteers and on many school days, there are more parents on site than staff members! Parents engage in many activities at school including tuckshop, gardening, helping in the library, or participating in art projects sharing their expertise with our teachers and students. Parents and families are an integral part of the River School.

In 2015, the school offered a number of avenues for parent involvement.

**Energy Levy:** Parents are requested to donate two hours a week (20 hours per term) in Energy Levy. They may assist in their child's class, help in tuckshop, assist on school camps, or help in other ways as needed.

**Parent Committee:** In 2015 there was an active Parents' Committee that organised Cafe Nights and a successful "Spring Festival", that served as a fundraiser, fun-raiser and marketing event. Our Cafe Nights involved dinner at the school with various events such as Open Mic nights, a whole school camp out and many student performances.



## Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

In 2015 all the parents and students of the River School were surveyed to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with the school. The results were extremely positive.

A sample of questions and responses from the parent survey are included below.

### PARENT SURVEY

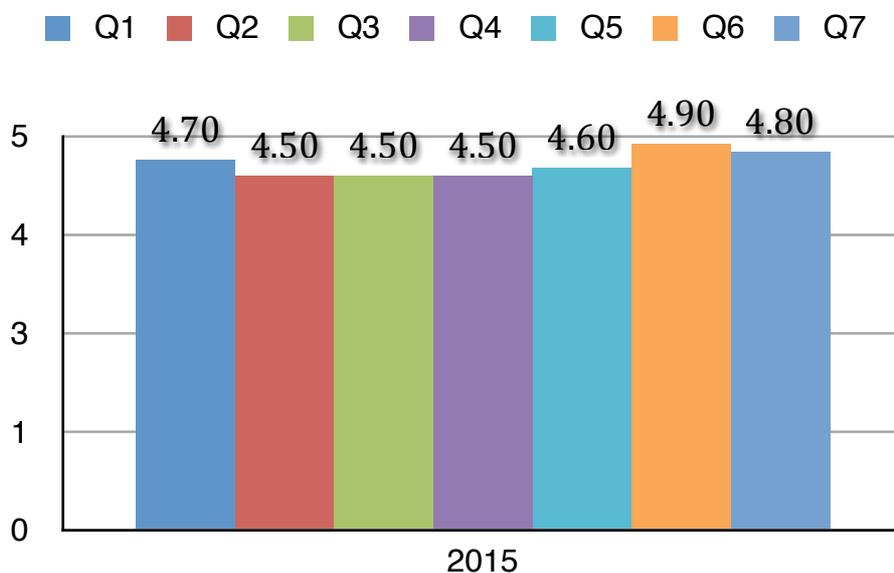
Our anonymous Parent survey was administered to all families at the River School. From our 106 families, we received 31 responses to our survey.

Parents were asked to rate statements on the following scale:

Rating	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

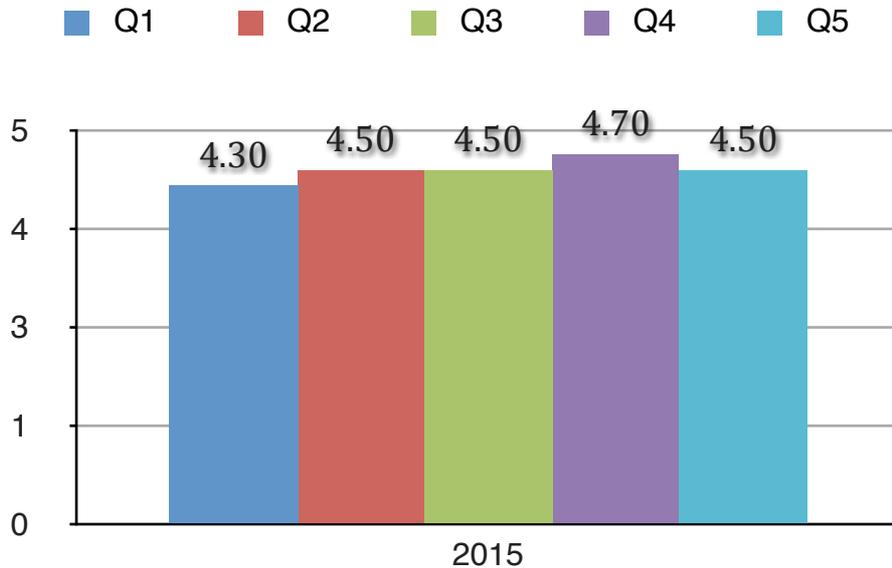
#### Care for Students

- Q1 My child loves being at the River School
- Q2 My child feels safe at school
- Q3 My child likes his/her teacher
- Q4 My child has a positive relationship with his/her teacher
- Q5 Teachers at the River School treat students fairly
- Q6 Teachers care about their students
- Q7 Students feel loved and cared for at our school



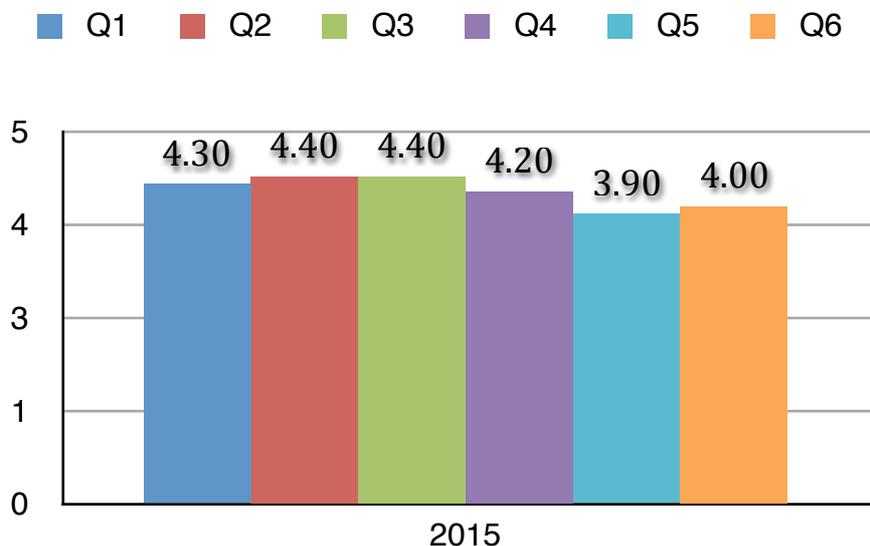
## Relationships and Communication

- Q1 I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns
- Q2 Parent's opinions are respected and taken seriously
- Q3 I am well-informed about what is happening at school
- Q4 I feel comfortable to approach administrative staff with concerns about what is happening at school
- Q5 I believe that any concerns that I raise are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner



## Quality of Teaching and Learning

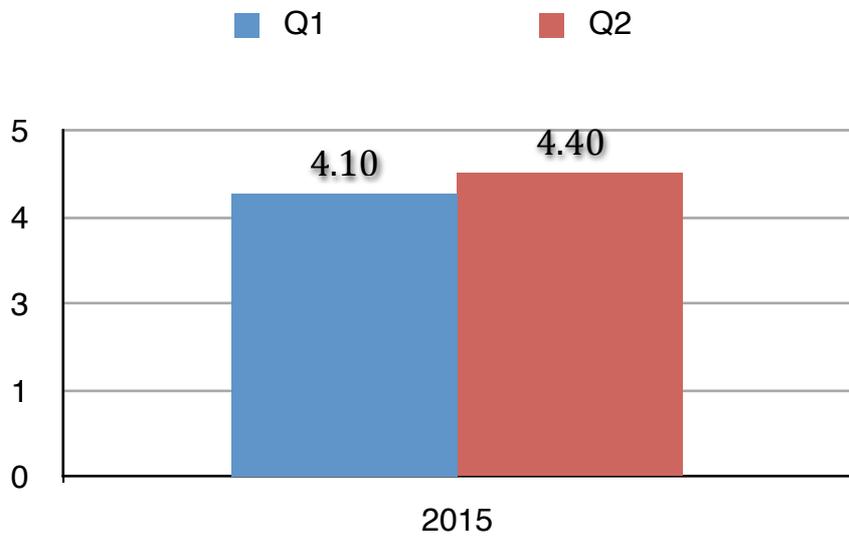
- Q1 Teachers are enthusiastic
- Q2 Teachers at the River School expect my child to do his/her best
- Q3 Teachers at the River School motivate my child to learn
- Q4 My child is making good progress at the River School
- Q5 My child's learning needs are being met
- Q6 Teachers provide my child with useful feedback about his/her school work



## Support for Learning

Q1 Student behaviour is well-managed and supported at our school

Q2 The school works with me to support my child's learning



## Other

Q1 The River School is well maintained

Q2 I value regular community events at school

Q3 The River School looks for ways to improve

Q4 I value meditation, yoga and the spiritual values of our school

Q5 We run a high quality Arts and Cultural Studies program at the River School



## STUDENT SURVEY

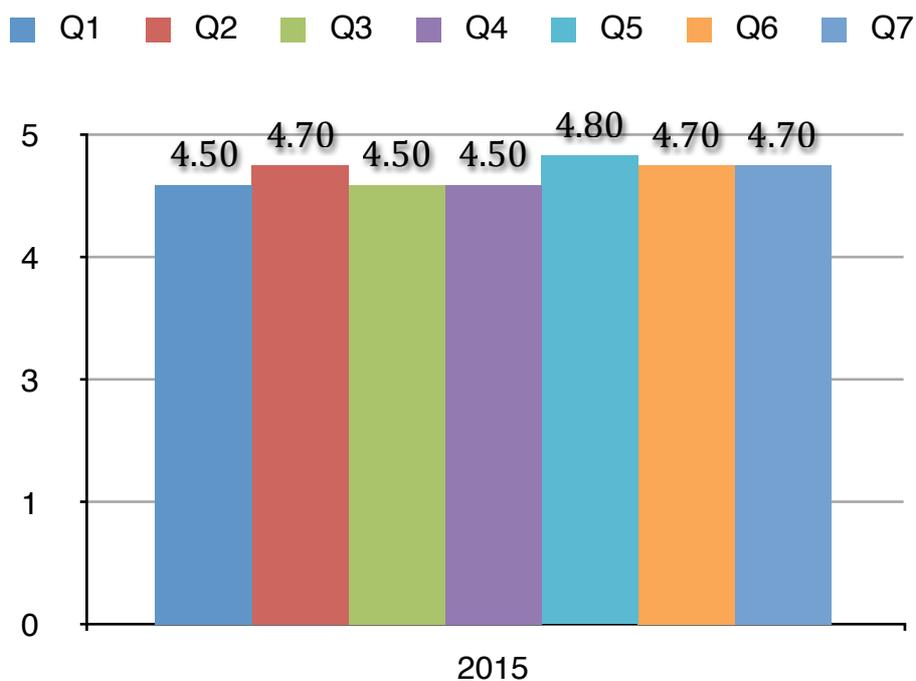
Our Student Survey was administered to students in Years 1-6 in November 2015. Students were asked to rate statements on the following scale:

Rating	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

From the responses received, each statement has been given a numerical score with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

### Care for Students

- Q1 My school takes students' opinions seriously
- Q2 I like being at my school
- Q3 I can talk to my teachers about my concerns
- Q4 I love coming to the River School
- Q5 I feel safe at school
- Q6 My teachers care about me
- Q7 The Principal cares about me



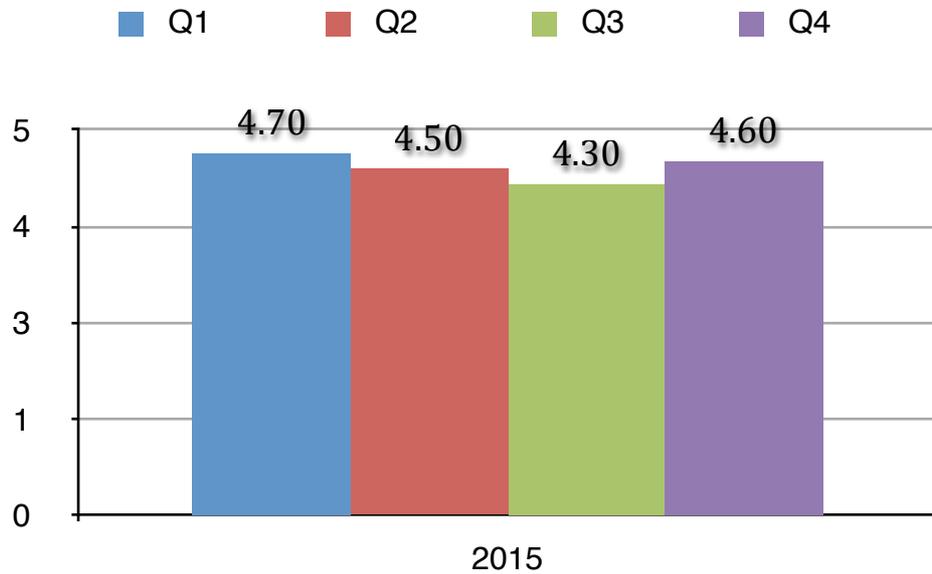
## Learning

Q1 My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things

Q2 My teachers motivate me to learn

Q3 My teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work

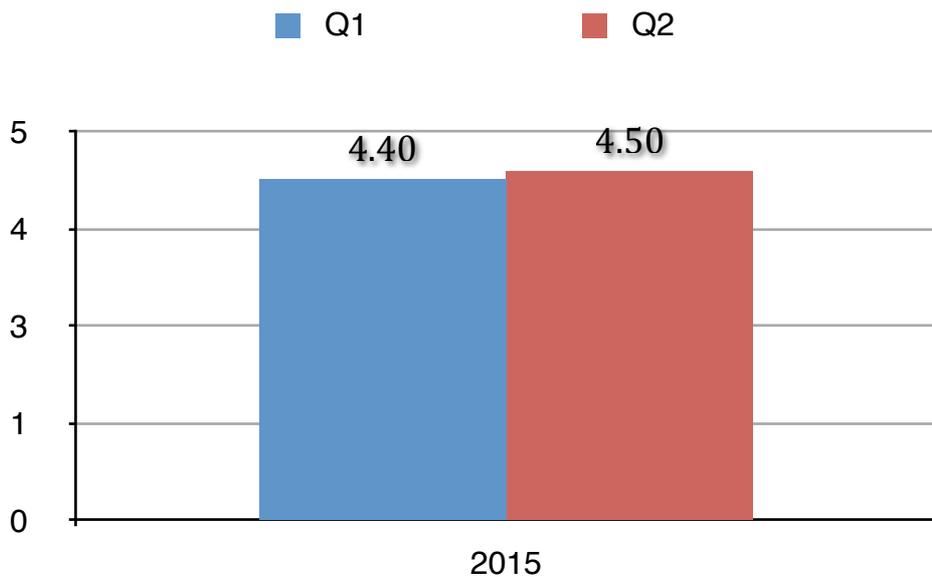
Q4 My teachers expect me to do my best



## Behaviour Support

Q1 Student behaviour is well managed at my school

Q2 Teachers at my school treat students fairly



## Other

Q1 My school looks for ways to improve

Q2 My school is well maintained



## School Income - Funding Sources

The Ananda Marga River School receives funding from a variety of sources including Federal and State funding, Grants, school fees and parent contributions. Details of funding sources can be found on the MySchool website.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

## Staffing Information

In 2015 our school employed:

- 7.6 Full time equivalent teachers
- 1.5 FTE Specialist Staff,
- 4.0 FTE Admin/Clerical Aides and
- 3.3 FTE Building/Grounds and Bus Drivers.

All of our classroom teachers hold a Bachelor's Degree. All of our classroom teachers participated in Professional Development opportunities in 2015 which included curriculum development, restorative practice, behaviour support and digital technologies. The school spent \$23,391.59 exc GST on Professional Development during 2015.

**Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days:**

<i>Number of Staff</i>	<i>Number of School Days</i>	<i>Total Days Staff Absences</i>	<i>Average Staff Attendance Rate</i>
25	3948	130	96.7%

**Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:**

<i>Number of permanent teaching staff at end of previous year</i>	<i>Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)</i>	<i>% retention rate</i>
11	11	100%

## **Key Student Outcomes**

### **Student attendance**

The Average Student Attendance Rate as a percentage in 2015 was 87%.

### **BENCHMARK DATA FOR 2014**

#### **Reading**

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2015)	366	426
Year 5 (2015)	514	499

#### **Writing**

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2015)	396	416
Year 5 (2015)	476	478

#### **Spelling**

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2015)	333	409
Year 5 (2015)	467	498

#### **Grammar and Punctuation**

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2015)	355	433
Year 5 (2015)	488	503

## Numeracy

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2015)	359	398
Year 5 (2015)	481	493

Benchmark date is available in detail at the *My School* website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

## Further Information

For further information about the Ananda Marga River School, or for a copy of our prospectus or enrollment information, please contact [admin@amriverschool.org](mailto:admin@amriverschool.org).

